

# If Democrats Controlled the House...

A Weekly Taste of Their Legislative Agenda

July 6, 2012



**Proposal:** H.R. 1643

**Sponsor:** Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL)

**Summary:** This bill would require that every existing and future public building acquired or constructed by the Administrator of General Services to be altered to enforce “bird-safe building materials and design features.”

**Problems with the Bill:** The bill’s problems begin with the findings, which discuss the proposed cost of the bill. The legislation insists that the “bird-safe design features can be incorporated into new construction and major renovation projects at no extra cost.” This claim implies that there are no cost differences whatsoever between “bird-safe” and “bird-dangerous” buildings, but that apparently the bird-hating construction companies intentionally try to torment pigeons by refusing to construct “award-winning, bird-friendly” buildings at the same price. Clearly this notion is unreasonable; if it were any cheaper to construct bird-safe buildings at the same utility, then a law requiring their construction in this manner would not be necessary. These and other economic assertions in this bill also make it questionable to trust the bill’s finding that making current buildings “bird-safe” could be done through “simple, low cost adaptations.”

However, even assuming that the bill is correct and the costs would be minimal rather than large (unlikely as this assumption might be), the bill would still be questionable. If the federal government is going to continue insisting upon rapidly accumulating history’s largest debt—which our children will someday be required to pay—it has a duty to ensure that the United States is borrowing money only for spending which is absolutely necessary. Making public buildings “bird-safe” does not seem to qualify. The federal government should not be taking money from future generations in order to slightly improve bird safety on public property. This legislation, which insists upon the national importance of saving [compassionate](#), [helpless](#) birds from apparently sentiently-murderous federal buildings, should probably not be a congressional priority.

**Reminder:** RSC staffers and interns are encouraged to send other examples of questionable legislation to [Rick.Eberstadt@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rick.Eberstadt@mail.house.gov).